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Statement of Dr. Sheldon Jackson
Before the Committee on territories.
1904.



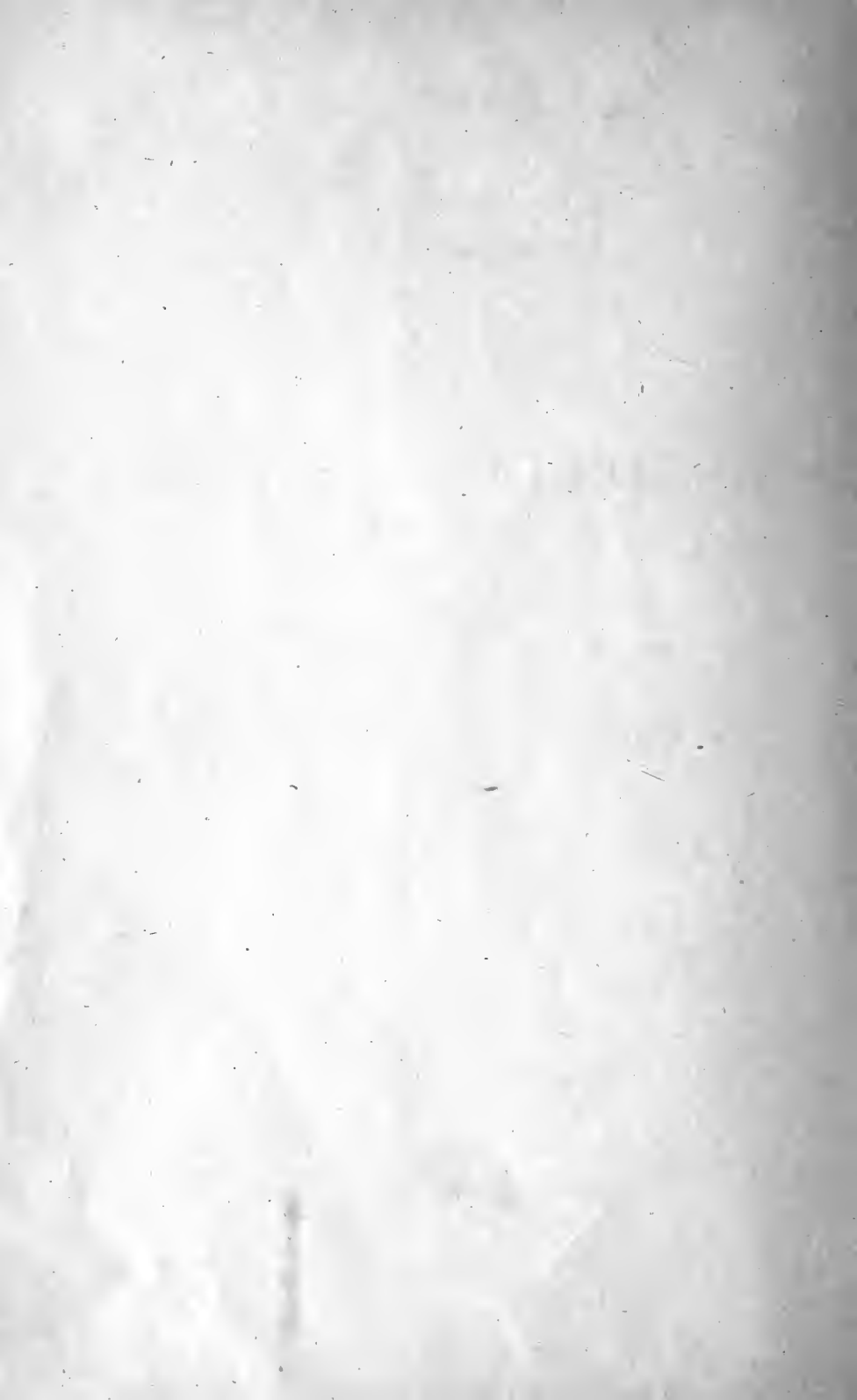


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ALASKA.

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STATEMENT

OF

DR. SHELDON JACKSON,
OF ALASKA,

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON THE TERRITORIES,

U.S.C. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 1904.

WASHINGTON:

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

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STATEMENT OF DR. SHELDON JACKSON, OF ALASKA.

THURSDAY, *March 10, 1904.*

The CHAIRMAN. Please state to the stenographer your full name and residence.

Doctor JACKSON. My name is Sheldon Jackson; residence, Washington, D. C., in the winter and Alaska in the summer; United States general agent of education in Alaska. I would state to the committee that I have been connected with the schools of Alaska from the beginning of the American occupation. I first went to Alaska in 1877, twenty-seven years ago, as a Presbyterian missionary. In 1885, under the organic act, I was appointed Government agent of education in Alaska, and have had charge not only of the white children but of the native populations during all these years in school matters until the legislation of 1900, when the white children of the incorporated towns were taken out from under the Bureau of Education and were placed under local school boards.

I might state, in passing, that I am interested in all the bills that are before the committee with regard to Alaska and, in a general way, approve of them. I am in favor of a delegate, of roads, of the helping of the natives, and of an increase of schools, but, naturally, in the few moments you are able to give me I wish to talk about the schools.

The first school system was that of the missionaries of the different denominations of Christians that went there, commencing with 1877. All the schools from 1877 to 1885 were carried on by the churches. In 1884 the organic act creating a civil government for Alaska directed that the Secretary of the Interior should make needful and adequate provision for the education of the children in Alaska without distinction of race, and gave the Secretary of the Interior the sum of \$25,000, when, if he had carried out the orders of Congress, it would have cost \$200,000 the first year. For sixteen years Congress appropriated all the way from \$15,000 to \$50,000 annually for the education of the children of Alaska, but the average appropriation for those sixteen years was \$29,000.

On June 6, 1900, Congress provided that there should be a license tax in Alaska, and allowed the incorporated towns to have 50 per cent of that license money to carry on their schools. Under this law several of the larger towns incorporated. On March 3, 1901, Congress supplemented or amended that act by which 50 per cent of the license funds, outside of incorporated towns, should be given to schools outside of the incorporated towns, under the Secretary of the Interior, in lieu of the annual appropriation which Congress had been making.

The result was that through a decision of the Attorney-General a large percentage of the license funds from outside of the incorporated towns were used up by the courts of Alaska, especially in the second district (Nome). In that district the license fund, outside of incor-

porated towns, amounted to \$57,564.41, of which Congress intended that education would get one-half, or about \$28,782.20, and education did not get a cent.

Mr. LLOYD. How do you account for that?

Doctor JACKSON. Simply because the wording of the act was that of "the moneys turned into the Treasury of the United States 50 per cent should be given to the Secretary of the Interior for education;" but the Attorney-General decided that a previous law in the civil code of 1900 allowed the clerk who collected the license tax to use what was necessary, at the discretion of the judge of the district, for court expenses, and that what was left after paying court expenses should be paid into the Treasury of the United States.

Mr. LLOYD. That needs remedying, does it not?

Doctor JACKSON. That was remedied on March 2, 1903. Congress amended the act again, and stated that 50 per cent of all moneys collected should be turned into the Treasury for education in Alaska.

Mr. LLOYD. I thought you said that law was construed the other way.

Doctor JACKSON. No, that was the law of 1900; but to correct that construction of the Attorney-General, on March 2, 1903, Congress amended the law of 1900 so that 50 per cent of all license moneys outside of incorporated towns should be paid into the Treasury for education.

Mr. LLOYD. This last year, since the passage of that act, you have received the necessary money, or one-half?

Doctor JACKSON. We have received the whole 50 per cent, I believe; but that has been very little.

Mr. ROBINSON. How much is it?

Doctor JACKSON. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1903, we received only \$19,742.62 for schools all over Alaska outside of incorporated towns. The present Congress has introduced two bills, Senate bill 3337 and House bill 10435 (similar bills), proposing to take the white children of Alaska and place them under the governor of Alaska as superintendent ex officio, and to use 25 per cent of the license funds collected in Alaska outside of incorporated towns for the carrying on of those schools.

Mr. LLOYD. Does the Bureau of Education agree to it?

Doctor JACKSON. It agrees to it, yes, sir; it is satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education.

Mr. LLOYD. Do you think it is the right thing to do?

Doctor JACKSON. Yes; that is, I am willing to have it done. The white men who pay the taxes and the license fees say, and justly: "We are paying 25 per cent for education, and we wish that expended for our own children. Let the native children in Alaska be educated by the Government, as they have been in Oklahoma Territory or Indian Territory, or elsewhere in the United States, by appropriations from Congress."

Mr. LLOYD. Has Congress made an appropriation for the native children?

Doctor JACKSON. Not yet. It has not passed the bills as yet.

Mr. LLOYD. That bill provides for the appropriation?

Doctor JACKSON. That bill provides that the white children shall be educated in schools to be supported by the license fund, and the native

children shall remain as they are, under the Bureau of Education, to be supported by an annual appropriation of Congress.

Mr. ROBINSON. That is, that changes the act?

Doctor JACKSON. That Congress shall give the Secretary of the Interior certain amounts for the education of the native children of Alaska.

Mr. LLOYD. With your experience in the difficulty of getting appropriations through, do you not think there is danger of that 25 per cent being cut off?

Doctor JACKSON. Well, I do not know. In the sixteen years that we received an annual appropriation we fared better than we have since under the license system. When spring opens, and we have to employ our teachers, we have no idea of the amount of money we will have to work with during the year. The license fees come in from three months to nine months after they are collected, and we do not know what we are going to receive. We are compelled to estimate the amount that the bureau of education will probably receive, and shape our expenses accordingly.

Mr. LLOYD. Those schools you speak of are for white children?

Doctor JACKSON. For whites and natives, under the present system, outside of incorporated towns.

Mr. LLOYD. You do not teach them together, do you?

Doctor JACKSON. No, sir.

Mr. LLOYD. You have separate schools?

Doctor JACKSON. As a rule they are separate. In some of the native towns where there are only three or four white children, and for the sake of getting any schooling at all the white children are glad to go into the native school; but where there is a sufficient number, as for instance at Juneau before it became an incorporated town, the bureau of education maintained separate schools for the white and native children, as it does now at Sitka. Where there are enough white children the bureau of education organizes a white school, and if there are a number of native children at the same place it also has a native school.

Mr. LLOYD. What kind of a system could be inaugurated by which you could have a definite fund, so that you could know just where you stand?

Doctor JACKSON. I do not know of any system by which you could do it, except by legislation that should fix the amount to be appropriated by Congress. Then when the appropriation is made we would know what we are to have, and we would gauge ourselves accordingly. If the amount was insufficient we would close some schools, or if the amount was ample we could increase the number of schools.

Mr. RODEY. What would be a reasonable amount for the education of all the Territory?

Doctor JACKSON. We are talking about the natives now. If S. 3728 goes through as it has been unanimously recommended to the Senate by the Senate committee, the education of the white children of Alaska will be eliminated from under the care of the Government. The Secretary of the Interior then will simply have the Eskimo and native children of Alaska to educate, and \$100,000 will do that. It will not only do that, but it will relieve the destitution that you have been hearing of for the last few years. Not only that, but it will civil-

ize those natives and make them useful assistants of the white men who go there.

Mr. LLOYD. Your suggestion is that, in addition to this legislation, which provides the necessary means for the white children, you may have an additional \$100,000 for all the natives?

Doctor JACKSON. Yes, sir. As soon as either the Senate or the House passes the Senate bill or this House bill that you have—it is House bill 10435. But we would like to be permitted to have the House bill amended so as to be like the Senate bill, which is before the Senate and which will probably be the first one reached.^a They will probably reach it before the House reaches their bill. The House bill is No. 10435.

In this connection I want to call attention to section 1 of the House bill—

Mr. ROBINSON. Before you go into the details I would like to ask you a question. I understand you have a process now that will yield you—about how much?

Doctor JACKSON. Fifty per cent of the license fees outside of the incorporated towns should yield this year about \$50,000; but the bills now before Congress propose giving that to the white schools.

Mr. ROBINSON. I am talking about the present system. How much do you hope it will yield?

Doctor JACKSON. Hereafter it ought to yield \$50,000 a year.

Mr. ROBINSON. That will yield, then, a fund for the education of—

Doctor JACKSON. Whites and natives.

Mr. ROBINSON. Together?

Doctor JACKSON. In separate schools, as now.

Mr. ROBINSON. Under the system you now have?

Doctor JACKSON. This system has been running eighteen years.

Mr. ROBINSON. Your purpose is to segregate the whites and the natives?

Doctor JACKSON. That is the purpose of Senate bill 3728 and H. R. 10435.

Mr. ROBINSON. And to allow this fund, under the present system, to stand for the whites, and let Congress take care of the natives?

Doctor JACKSON. Yes.

Mr. ROBINSON. Have you any objection to the present school system, outside of this effort that is made to secure relief directly from the Treasury for the native education?

Doctor JACKSON. No; we have no objection. It is working well for the schools already established, but it is not sufficient to maintain all the schools that should be established at once.

Mr. ROBINSON. Then I take it this is an effort that is made to use the fund that is now used for the natives as well as the whites, for the whites, and let Congress take care of the natives.

Doctor JACKSON. Yes, sir; it remedies a complaint that we have all over Alaska. The white men say, "We are paying the money and you are educating the natives, while many white children are denied school privileges."

Mr. ROBINSON. The whites who have gone there think they ought not to be charged with the burden, but that the whole people of the United States ought to be charged with it?

^a S. 3728 passed the Senate March 10, 1904.

Doctor JACKSON. That is the belief. It is natural that the whites who pay the school money ought to have the benefit of it for their children.

Mr. ROBINSON. It is not because of any defect in the school system, which is perfectly satisfactory to you?

Doctor JACKSON. I would answer no to the first question and yes to the second.

Mr. ROBINSON. Covering both natives and whites?

Doctor JACKSON. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there any further questions?

Mr. McGUIRE. Doctor Jackson was referring to a section of the bill.

Doctor JACKSON. Yes. In House bill 10435, on the first page, section 1, lines 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9—the Senate have struck out those lines in the bill reported to the Senate (S. 3728) simply because of the previous inequality of the court taking out all the money it needs first and then paying the balance to the Treasury, which we have already found from actual experience yielded a fund insufficient for the schools. To remedy this the act was amended by Congress March 2, 1903; but the objectionable feature is reintroduced by an oversight in the first bills (S. 3337 and H. R. 10435) which were offered in the Senate and House of Representatives. The Senate committee saw the mistake and corrected it before reporting the bill to the Senate for action (S. 3728), and my purpose in calling your attention to it is that this committee may also correct the House bill (H. R. 10435) in the same way.

Then in section 7 of the same bill—page 11 of the House bill. Both bills originally proposed taking the education of the Eskimos and natives of Alaska out of the hands of the Commissioner of Education and placing them under the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The natives of Alaska are on an entirely different footing from the natives in any other region in the United States. There has never been an Indian agent or an Indian reservation in Alaska. The natives of Alaska have never been under the Indian laws of the country, with the exception of the law as to the sale of liquors and breech-loading firearms. That clause, however, concerning breech-loading firearms has been repealed, so that the only restriction of the Indian laws of the United States over Alaska is as to the sale of liquor to natives.

The Bureau of Education has, since 1885, had charge of the schools of the Alaska natives. We think it has built up a system which while not perfect any more than any human system is perfect, yet is working successfully, which has produced good results, and which it would take any other department of the Government some years to bring to the same efficiency. We simply ask that if the native schools are segregated from the white schools they shall be left under the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Education. We have shown in our southeast Alaska schools the fruit of the present school system. There is no destitution to-day among any of the native population of southeast Alaska any more than you find destitution in any white village or towns of the country in proportion to the population. There are shiftless people of every race; but most of the native population of southeast Alaska are self-supporting and have always been. They have never received a dollar of help from the Government in any form or shape except in the matter of giving them an education. They are a self-supporting hard-working people. The majority of the young people that have gone through the schools are making good citizens.

What has been done in southeast Alaska can be done in the same length of time in northwestern Alaska. The newspaper reports of destitution among the Eskimos that are given to the country will cease if the Government will give the Bureau of Education an adequate appropriation to go on with the system which they have learned by experience to be the best for that country.

Mr. LLOYD. How do you overcome the destitution? Is that condition overcome by education?

Doctor JACKSON. Largely by industrial education in connection with the primary literary education and the fatherly oversight of teachers sincerely interested in the welfare of the natives. It has been tried in a number of the missions and institutions of different churches, and it has been tried in a number of the Government schools, and it has largely eliminated the question of destitution among the natives where tried.

Mr. LLOYD. What is the effect of the Government schools upon the church schools?

Doctor JACKSON. When the public school was started the mission orphanages closed their schoolrooms and sent their children to the public school. For instance, at Unalaska the Methodist Church built up an orphanage and home and the Russian Orthodox Church had a parochial school. When the Government established a public school the Methodists closed their schoolroom and sent the children to the public school. The Russian Church closed their school at noon and sent the pupils in the afternoon to the public school. Both churches continue to feed, clothe, and train in the industries the children in their orphanage or home, but for literary training they come to the Government school. The children of the Methodist orphanage and the Russian orphanage all come to the Government schools for their book learning. That is the case in many other places. The missions received some children from their parents, and in 1900 took a larger number, made orphans by the epidemic of that year, which caused the death of one-third of the native population on the shores of Bering Sea. There were hundreds of children left without parents or relatives, and the missions took care of them. The missions simply had to gather them in, and now the Government is giving secular education to the children of those missions. There is no conflict and no competition. The work is harmonious between the missions and the Government teachers.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair desires to make a suggestion. I presume it will be the desire of the committee to rise about half-past 11 o'clock, will it not, to-day? I understand from various members of the committee that they desire to adjourn at 11 o'clock. Now, according to the watch belonging to the Chair, it is about 18 minutes of 11. I never can be quite sure of this watch; but there are one or two important matters, and I want to suggest, without objection, that while the Chair does not want to cut you out of your peroration, Doctor Jackson, so to speak, without objection from the committee, if there are certain important matters which you can not include in your remarks this morning that you might extend them in your remarks when you revise them for printing. If there be no objection that might be done.

Doctor JACKSON. In reply to that I will say that I have already prepared a statement which I was going to ask leave to incorporate in my

remarks concerning a method for permanently relieving the natives of northern and central Alaska.

The CHAIRMAN. If there is no objection that will be done. The Chair hears no objection.

The statement above referred to is as follows:

Permanent relief of the Eskimos and other natives of northern and central Alaska.

For some months past the newspapers have from time to time published cases of destitution among the Eskimos and the natives of northern and central Alaska, also the ravages of consumption and other diseases, and the demoralization caused by the proximity to the saloons that are being established in the new mining settlements. While these newspaper reports are doubtless more or less exaggerated, yet from the official reports of Brig. Gen. Frederick Funston to the Adjutant-General United States Army, Washington, D. C.; of Mr. James W. Witten, special inspector of the General Land Office, to the Secretary of the Interior (both of which reports are printed in the appendix of the report of the Secretary of the Interior for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1903); from interviews had with members of the committee of the United States Senate that visited Alaska during the past summer, also from my personal knowledge, there is a certain amount of destitution, a prevalence of consumption, and demoralization from liquor that should receive attention from the General Government.

This raised the question what that attention should be and how these natives can be made valuable helpers and assistants in the development of the country by the white men now there engaged in mining operations.

Any successful method of accomplishing such desirable results must keep clearly before it the aim to prepare the natives to become a help to the immigrants who come from the States for the purpose of conducting mining operations. There are two things which the native may be taught to do which will enable him to help the immigrant: First, he may be taught how to create a supply of cheap food; second, he may be taught how to supply a cheap transportation by means of reindeer. It is known that in the river valleys certain garden vegetables may be produced in large quantities even up to the Arctic Circle and for fifty miles beyond it. The native knows how to take fish from the rivers and from the sea for his family use, and with proper training can be made an equally successful fishermen for the market.

The experience of the past twelve years has proved that he can also become skillful in raising reindeer for food. With the gradual disappearance of the caribou and moose in sections of Alaska and the difficulty and expense of bringing beef and mutton from the States to the inland mining camps, it is of great importance that the Eskimo be trained to raise reindeer with which to supply the immigrant miner with fresh meat.

When, in the winter of 1897-98, 400 sailors engaged in whaling were imprisoned in the ice off Point Barrow and in danger of perishing with scurvy and starvation, they were saved by the reindeer herd driven by Eskimos from Bering Strait to Point Barrow and slaughtered for food.

Already 56 Eskimos and 1 Indian (nearly all of whom have served a five years' apprenticeship learning the business) own 3,700 deer. Reindeer multiply rapidly. From the 1,291 Siberian reindeer imported between 1892 and 1903 and from their natural increase 7,826 fawns have been born in Alaska.

The Eskimo has always been skillful in driving dogs, and now, under instruction, he is proving equally skillful in driving reindeer, and upon various occasions when the opportunity has offered has invariably demonstrated his ability to successfully transport with reindeer mails, freight, and passengers between mining camps. Under contract with the Post-Office Department the United States mail has been carried by reindeer teams on the four postal routes between St. Michael and Kotzebue, Eaton and Nome, Teller and Deering, and Kotzebue and Point Barrow (this latter being the most northern mail route in the world). With the increase of reindeer and trained native teamsters such service will become universal in northern and central Alaska.

When the native has thus become useful to the white man by supplying the markets with fish and fresh meat, and when he has become herdsman and teamster with reindeer he has not only assisted the white man in solving the problem of turning to use of civilization the vast territory of Alaska, but he has also solved his own problem. If useful to the white man as a self-respecting and industrious citizen he has become a permanent stay and prop to the civilization and his future is provided for.

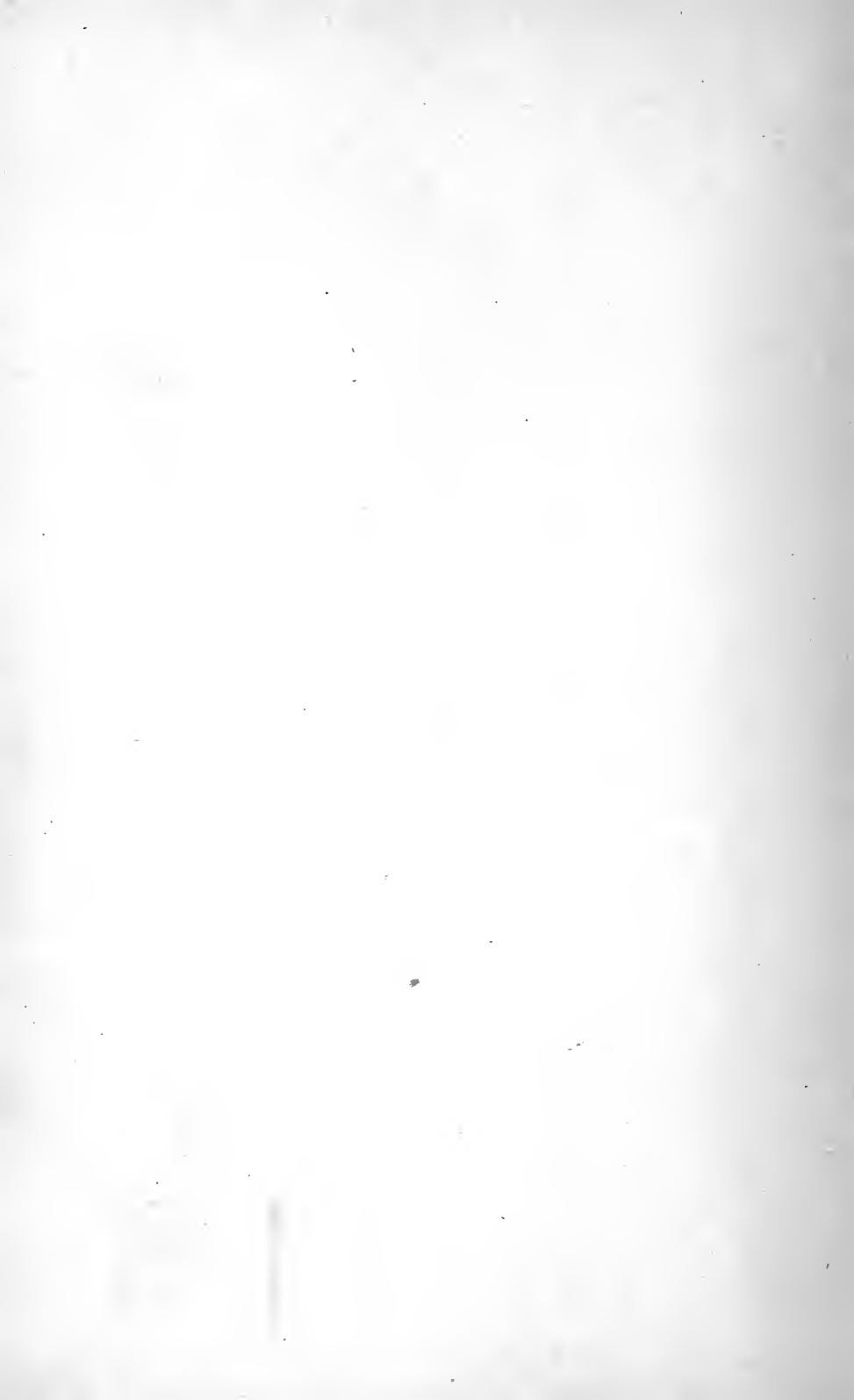
The conclusion resulting from this is that the native must be taught in school how to speak English and be trained in industrial schools into the simple arts of agriculture and fishing and of reindeer herding and teaming with a view to provide cheap food and cheap transportation for the use of the immigrant.

To accomplish such training it is important that an increased number of small industrial schools shall be established at centers convenient to the native population.

At these schools in addition to elementary instruction in the English language there shall be given special instruction (a) in making fish nets and in adopting improved methods of catching and preparing fish for family use and for sale; (b) in the care and raising of reindeer and in the breaking and use in transportation; (c) wherever the conditions of soil and climate will allow in the cultivation of hardy vegetables.

While destitution is not at present very widespread among the natives, yet it may be wise to have at each of these schools a small supply of food and clothing to afford temporary relief for very special cases of destitution. The principal of the school can be made a bonded officer of the Government and be charged with the care and distribution of such supplies without additional expense to the Government.

The Secretary of the Interior has again and again called the attention of Congress to the need of hospitals for the natives. These should be provided for at once. But when the hospitals are erected they will necessarily be accessible to comparatively limited areas. In addition to the proposed hospitals, very important service may be rendered and a greatly increased number of natives benefited by the employment of a physician in connection with each of the industrial schools. This plan has been in successful operation at several of the missionary stations in Alaska, and also at the Government agency where tried.



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